

## 12.700     SEARCH WARRANTS/CONSENT TO SEARCH

### ***References:***

Ohio Revised Code 2933.21 - Search Warrant  
Ohio Revised Code 2933.22 - Probable Cause  
Ohio Revised Code 2933.23 - Affidavit for Search Warrant  
Ohio Revised Code 2933.241 - Inventory of Property Taken  
U.S. Supreme Court No. 98-83 - Wilson v. Layne  
Ohio Supreme Court – Middletown v. Flinchum  
Procedure 12.131 - Confidential Informant  
Procedure 12.175 – Use of Special Weapons and Tactics Unit  
Procedure 12.735 - Federal and State Forfeitures

### ***Purpose:***

Aid in detecting and arresting persons committing crimes and in procuring evidence in criminal cases.

Prevent the suppression of evidence and dismissal of cases on procedural grounds.

Develop public confidence in the Police Department by carrying out the police function in an ethical and lawful manner.

Protect the constitutional rights of citizens.

The primary goal of any high-risk tactical operation is always safety. That means the safety of all officers involved as well as innocent bystanders and subjects. A secondary concern is the retrieval of evidence. Retrieval of evidence is considered only after safety issues are addressed. A successful search warrant service is comprised of three components: planning, execution, and documentation.

### ***General Information:***

The life of all Ohio search warrants is 72 hours from the time of issuance by the judge. Included in the strict 72 hour time limit are Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. The search warrant is good for only one search.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it is a violation of the Fourth Amendment for police to bring members of the media or other third parties into a home during the execution of a warrant when the presence of the third parties in the home was not in aid of the execution of the warrant.

The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled officers may make warrantless entries into a wanted person's home for a misdemeanor following the fresh pursuit of misdemeanor offenders.

***Policy:***

Obtain supervisory review and approval of search warrants before contacting the court. For advice in drafting the search warrant, contact members of the Central Vice Control Section or Criminal Investigation Section. If requiring additional legal information, Police Communications Section (PCS) has a list of home phone numbers of on-call members of the Municipal Court Prosecutor's Office.

Unless specifically requested by the judge, do not take confidential informants to the judge's home when applying for a search warrant.

Affiant officers and their supervisors will direct and control others that aid in the service of search warrants. Final responsibility for proper service of search warrants remains with the affiant officer and supervisor in charge.

Officers will notify their immediate supervisor before aiding in the service of a search warrant obtained by another law enforcement agency. The supervisor will respond to ensure the search warrant meets Department standards.

Officers will notify their immediate supervisor before allowing a third party into the home during the execution of a warrant and permission will only be granted if the third party's presence will aid in the execution of the warrant.

***Procedure:*****A. Consent Searches:**

1. Request individuals to sign a Consent to Search Without a Warrant Form (Form 601) when conducting **ALL** consent searches of residences.
  - a. Notify a supervisor if an individual gives verbal consent but refuses to sign the Form 601.
    - 1) Supervisor will respond to the scene to verify the consent was given.
    - 2) Do not search until a signature is obtained or a supervisor confirms receipt of verbal consent.
    - 3) Document on Form 601 - "REFUSED SIGNATURE" in the space provided for the signature of the consenting person.
  - b. Contact a Central Vice Control Section supervisor for questions regarding consent to search procedures.
2. When completing a Form 601 document all pertinent information related to the consensual search.
  - a. The inventory portion of the Form 601 should be completed in the presence of the person who signed the form.

- b. The individual is to be given the white-citizen copy of the completed Form 601 as a receipt of all items confiscated during the search.
- c. Officers must have a supervisor sign the Form 601 before securing his/her shift.

B. Obtaining a Search Warrant:

- 1. An affidavit is the basis for a search warrant. A search warrant is valid when the affidavit satisfies the legal requirements for such warrants. Prepare the affidavit stating:

- a. The nature of the offense.
  - 1) The affidavit and warrant must describe the actual criminal offense being investigated.
- b. Give a precise description of the place to be searched. Affiant officers must see the exact location, e.g., house, apartment, floor, and door where officers will correctly enter to serve the search warrant. Supervisors will confirm affiant officers have this personal knowledge before approving plans for serving the search warrant.
  - 1) Where possible, use actual street addresses. Ensure the address given is complete and accurate. Include a brief description of the premises and exact portion of the house or other building to be searched.

Example: Apartment #28, on the 5th floor inside the large brown brick apartment building located at 3500 Reading Road, Cincinnati, Ohio.

- 2) When searching a motor vehicle, include the name of the owner (if known) and the make and license number of the vehicle.

Example: A 1976 Chevrolet Camaro, red in color, bearing Ohio license plate number 123 ABC. License plates on said vehicle are registered to John Doe at 5220 Madison Road, Cincinnati, Ohio.

- c. Specify in the affidavit and warrant the items sought.
  - 1) There are four categories of items which may be the subject of a search warrant:
    - a) Fruits of a crime.
    - b) Instruments of a crime.
    - c) Evidence of a crime.

- d) Contraband.
- 2) Officers may seize items discovered:
  - a) Unexpectedly during the search for items named in the warrant, or
  - b) Incidental to a lawful arrest. Seizure is permissible without the need of a second search warrant.
- d. Probable cause:
  - 1) Probable cause for a search warrant are facts and circumstances strong enough by themselves to cause a prudent officer to believe articles subject to seizure are being held on the property.
  - 2) An officer may have either first or second hand knowledge of these facts.
    - a) If the second hand knowledge involves information from an undisclosed informant, the officer must support the informant's trustworthiness. Explain prior dealings with this source have shown a pattern of reliability and the informant had a reasonable basis for obtaining the information.
- 2. Complete the search warrant form in duplicate.
  - a. Direct the search warrant to the head of the local law enforcement agency where service will occur.
  - b. Search warrant service normally occurs during daylight hours. State law defines daylight hours as the hours between 0700 - 2000. If a nighttime search is necessary, clearly state in the affidavit the reasons which make it necessary.
    - 1) Without the nighttime entry specification, the warrant restricts the officer to a daytime entry. However, a detailed and thorough search starting during the daytime may extend into the night without becoming an illegal search.
- 3. During normal court hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday), the scheduled duty judge will review and sign the search warrant. This judge can be found in his/her usual courtroom.
  - a. The duty judge is also the contact judge for search warrants from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., Monday through Friday. To contact a judge after normal court hours, officers will:
    - 1) Advise the Clerk of Courts of the need for a judge to secure a search warrant.

- 2) The Clerk of Courts will contact the judge by telephone or pager.
- 3) The judge will contact the officer and make the necessary arrangements to have the search warrant reviewed and issued.
- b. From 4:00 p.m. Friday until 8:00 a.m. Monday, the Room A judge is the contact judge for search warrants.
  - 1) This judge can be located in Room A at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday and some Sundays. This judge will be available at all other weekend times through the Clerk of Courts' office.
4. Requesting a "No Knock" search warrant.
  - a. The affiant officer must add the following four points in addition to the probable cause listed in Section A.1.d. above.
    - 1) The affiant officer must show why the police need a "No Knock" waiver (e.g., violent history of suspect).
    - 2) The affiant officer must give the names and descriptions of armed suspects he believes may try to harm officers during the search.
    - 3) The affiant officer must give a statement showing a connection between the address in question and the criminal activity (e.g., the building owner states Jane Doe is the resident on record for apt. #5 at 1234 Smith St. and Jane Doe is the wife of suspect John Doe).
    - 4) The affiant officer must add the following waiver just above the area where the judge signs the warrant: "Furthermore, for good cause shown, I waive the statutory precondition for nonconsensual entry."
  - b. After review by a command officer (captain or above), contact the City Prosecutor. The City Prosecutor will contact a judge and arrange for a court reporter to record the proceedings.
    - 1) If other than normal business hours, contact the City Prosecutor through PCS.
  - c. All "No Knock" search warrants are high risk search warrants requiring the use of SWAT.

C. Supervisor's Responsibility Before Entry:

1. Have members of the affiant unit begin watching the premises about one hour before serving the search warrant.
  - a. Estimate the number, nature, and sex of probable occupants.

- 1) Determine whether there are others in the premises requiring special consideration during the entry (e.g., children, elderly, dogs, etc.).
2. Determine how many officers it will take to safely enter the premises and conduct a thorough, controlled search. Limit the size of the search party to the number of personnel needed to carry out the search properly.
  - a. Department personnel involved in the search warrant service will wear body armor.
3. Ensure a captain or above reviews the operational plan of any search warrant where forced entry is anticipated.
4. Obtain the aid of the SWAT Team in the service of high risk search warrants.
  - a. A high risk search warrant is one where the officers expect:
    - 1) Fortified locations.
    - 2) Armed subject.
    - 3) Subject has an outstanding warrant for Homicide, Rape, Felonious Assault, Aggravated Robbery, or Aggravated Assault.
    - 4) Any other situation where the potential for violence is great (No Knock search warrants).
    - 5) A Search Warrant Service Risk Assessment Matrix is completed and indicates the need for obtaining the aid of SWAT for the service of the search warrant.
  - b. When possible, submit requests to use SWAT through the SWAT Commander or SWAT Coordinator before preparing the search warrant.
  - c. When advance notice is not possible, notify the district commander or Night Chief (when during his tour of duty) for approval to request SWAT. Request SWAT by calling PCS.
    - 1) PCS will use the standard SWAT notification procedure.
  - d. SWAT personnel will handle the entry phase of the search and secure the premises. The unit obtaining the search warrant is responsible for the actual search.
5. Contact the Asset Forfeiture Squad when expecting seizure of contraband, money, or vehicles subject to forfeiture (see Procedure 12.735).

6. Conduct a detailed briefing.
  - a. Include the use of charts, photographs, floor plans, etc., where necessary.
  - b. Assign specific duties to each individual.
  - c. Select a specific radio channel to use during service of the search warrant. Inform a PCS supervisor of this channel and the location of the warrant service.
  - d. Inform all officers involved of the type of warrant being served and the exact location and description of the residence or facility in question.
  - e. Describe the suspects in detail.
  - f. Assess doors for their locations and accessibility. Include their direction of opening, material construction, and locking devices.
  - g. Identify the best route for approaching the location.
  - h. Assess the types of weapons and fortification expected including possible booby traps.
  - i. Complete a detailed check off list. The check off list will contain, but is not limited to, the following information:
    - Name and description of offender.
    - Criminal history.
    - Address and description of premises.
    - Phone number.
    - Type of vehicles, (QR/QD).
    - Weapons.
    - Employer's name and address.
    - Children (ages), girlfriend/wife.
    - Dogs, etc.
    - Type of door.
    - Officers needed to secure inside and outside of premises.
    - Check with other units and agencies.
    - Location of drugs.
    - Vest, weapons, flashlights.
    - Any additional items.

D. Gaining Entry:

1. A supervisor will be on the search warrant scene during the service of all search warrants.
2. Secure the perimeter of the premises before entry. Have all doors and windows under observation.

3. Officers will clearly notify persons inside the search site of their presence and request admission.  
Example: "Police officers, search warrant, open the door."
4. Use force to enter the premises only after waiting a reasonable amount of time for an occupant to open the door.
  - a. A reasonable amount of time is that time necessary for an occupant to reach the door from the furthest part of the premises.
  - b. If, while waiting for the door to open, there is some sign the occupant is fleeing, fortifying their position, destroying evidence or contraband, or taking action that would jeopardize the safety of the officers, force open the door immediately.
  - c. Upon entry, have one officer continue to announce the identity and purpose of the entering officers.
    - 1) Officers not in uniform will display proper identification (e.g., badge, ID, etc.) when serving the search warrant.
    - 2) A uniformed officer of the local law enforcement agency will be present during the search.
5. The supervisor in charge will complete an after action report when warrant service required forced entry.

E. Search Procedures:

1. The supervisor in charge of the search warrant scene will ensure officers make a security sweep of the entire premises immediately after entry.
2. Secure, search, and identify any occupants. After searching all the occupants for weapons, direct them to a previously searched area. Assign an officer to remain with the subjects.
3. The supervisor in charge will ensure an officer presents and explains the search warrant to the responsible occupant.
4. Search the premises in a thorough, orderly fashion. Upon discovering an article subject to seizure, the finding officer will summon a witnessing officer. If practical, videotape or photograph the article in the location where officers found it.
  - a. Assign one person to collect, preserve, and document all items seized until possession is transferred to the Court Property Unit.
    - 1) A supervisor will witness the counting and handling of large sums of money and other valuables.



F. Post-Search Requirements:

1. Properly secure the premises upon completion of the search.
  - a. Note the nature and extent of any damage caused during the entry and searching procedure. When applicable, prepare a Form 17 and a Form 301, Incident Report.
2. Officers taking property under the authority of a search warrant will:
  - a. Give the person from whom or from whose premises the property was taken a copy of the warrant and completed return portion of the search warrant as receipt for the property taken.
    - 1) Make the inventory in the presence of the applicant for the warrant and the person from whose possession or premises the property was taken if they are present. If one is not present, make the inventory in the presence of at least one credible person other than the applicant for the warrant or the person from whose possession or premises the property was taken.
  - b. If the person is not present, leave the copy and return portion of the search warrant at the place from which the property was taken.
  - c. Promptly return the affidavit, the warrant itself, and the completed return to the issuing judge. Make the return to the judge assigned to Room A when the issuing judge is unavailable. The evidence taken in the search warrant must be available to the judge accepting the return if requested.
    - 1) Deliver the affidavit, warrant, and return to the Clerk of Courts after review by the judge accepting the return.